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Pilot-UFO, Pilot Cites 2nd UFO Sighting

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — For the second time in two months, a Japan Air Lines pilot has reported spotting an unidentified object that seemed to be flying near his cargo jet over central Alaska.

Capt. Kenjyu Terauchi reported his second sighting Sunday on a cargo flight from London to a refueling stop in Anchorage, said Paul Steucke, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration.

Terauchi's co-pilot reported seeing the lights, Steucke said, but the flight engineer, who sits farther back in the Boeing 747 cockpit, "indicated he was uncertain whether he saw any lights at all."

Steucke said FAA officials and experienced pilots speculated that Sunday's sighting could have been caused by light bouncing off ice crystals in the atmosphere.

On Nov. 17, Terauchi reported that two bright objects and third object as wide as two aircraft carriers placed end-to-end followed his JAL plane for more than 300 miles as it flew to Anchorage from Iceland.

"We asked him point-blank if this was like the Nov. 17 sighting, and he said, 'No, no, there's no similarity between the two,'" Steucke said.

Terauchi said he saw the lights twice Sunday, once for about 20 minutes and again for about 10 minutes as his plane flew at 37,000 feet. He notified an air traffic controller in Anchorage of the sighting.

"His statement to the controller was 'irregular lights, looks like a spaceship,'" Steucke said.

Unlike the lights that he reported in November, which seemed to stay with him even when he took evasive action, the lights seen Sunday appeared to approach from the front of the plane, went beneath it and reappeared to the rear.

Controllers and the supervisors immediately checked their radar screens for objects in the vicinity of the JAL flight Sunday. "There were none, and that was confirmed" by military radar, Steucke said.

In the Nov. 17 incident, air traffic controllers spotted what they believed was a split image of the aircraft caused by a minor problem with the plane's radar transponder, Steucke said earlier. It was coincidence that the split image was located where Terauchi reported seeing the objects, he said.

The military also dismissed the blip seen in the earlier incident, calling it radar clutter.

Steucke said that both times Terauchi reported seeing lights Sunday, his plane was flying over villages.

"The ground temperature in the area was about minus-23 and there was a temperature inversion at 23,500 feet," he said. "Temperature inversions in cold climates, with ice crystals, have been known to create a bounce light effect."

Light from the villages could have reflected off ice crystals in the inversion and appeared to be hovering in midair, Steucke said. As the plane approached and passed over villages, the reflected light would appear to go under the aircraft and reappear behind it, as Terauchi described, Steucke said.

Steucke said the bounce-light theory is only speculation and is not an FAA finding in the case. "Those of us involved in this talked about it," he said. "People who are experienced at flying mentioned that is not an infrequent occurrence."

Both sightings are under investigation, Steucke said.

[From AP newswire. Copy courtesy of Mark A. Hall.]